

Hopewell Township Environmental Commission



DECEMBER 2010

Burden Hill Forest

The majority of land in Hopewell Township has been cleared for agricultural use and less than 10% of the Township remains as forest habitat. Forested areas and trees are, therefore, one of the most precious natural resources in the Township.

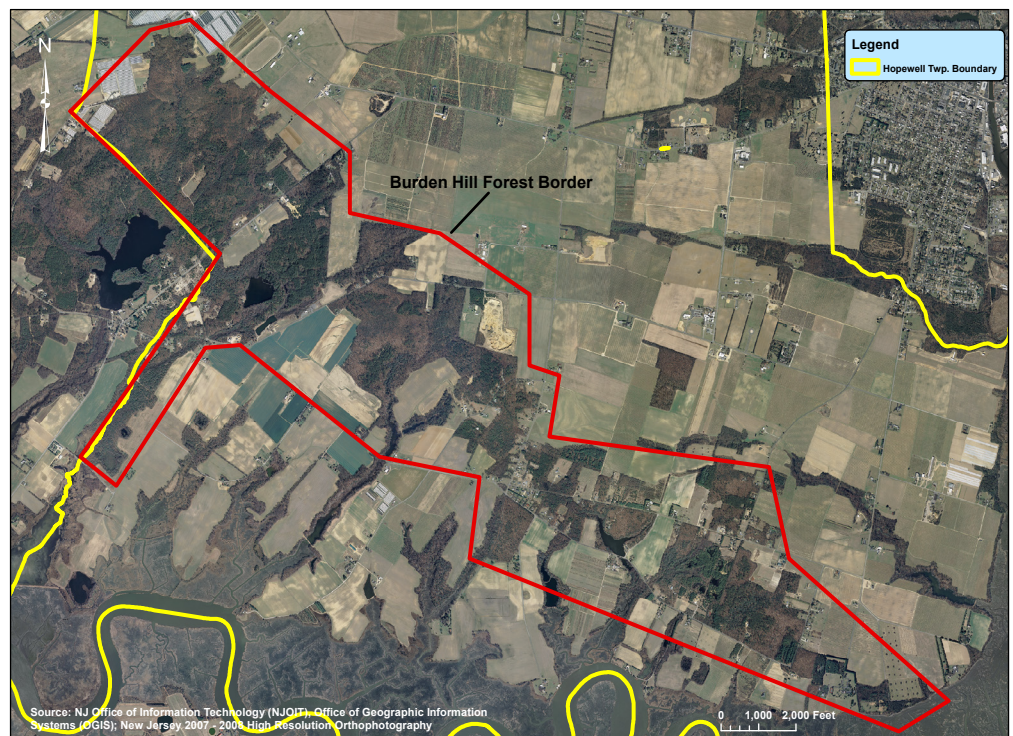
A small finger of the Burden Hill Forest extends into Hopewell Township. This area is an important

groundwater recharge area with very high infiltration rates and harbors unusually high populations of rare plants and animals.

The Hopewell Township Environmental Commission has implemented a landowner outreach effort to emphasize the importance of protection and preservation of this valuable natural resource.

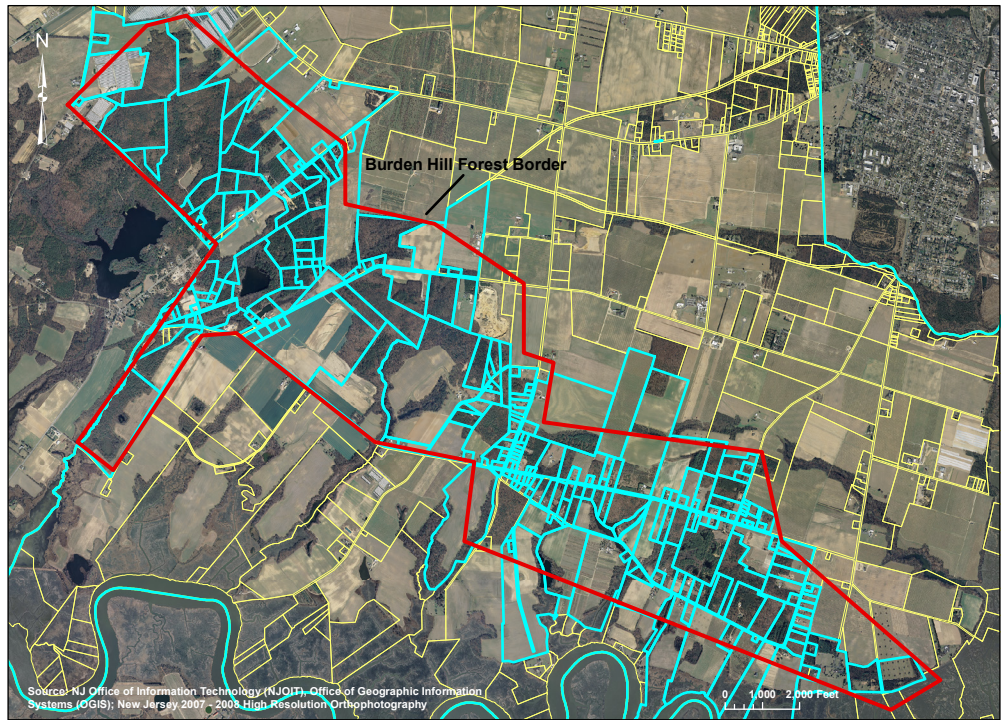
The 15,000-acre Burden Hill Forest occupies parts of Quinton, Alloway, Lower Alloways Creek, Stow Creek, Greenwich, and Hopewell Townships in Salem and Cumberland counties. This primarily oak-pine forest is considered by some to be an outlying remnant of the Pine Barrens ecological community. An exceptional environmental ecosystem, the Forest harbors unusually high populations of many rare plants and animals.

Burden Hill Forest ("BHF") also serves as the headwaters for important tributaries to the Delaware Bay, including the Salem and Co-hansey Rivers, and Alloway and Stow Creeks. Surrounded by thousands of acres of productive farmland that depend on long-term supplies of ground and surface water, the BHF provides an essential service to agricultural and residential wells as it recharges groundwater aquifers and holds back advancing salt water intrusion from the Bay and tidal creeks.



Burden Hill Forest Overview

Burden Hill Forest possesses similar soils to those of the Pine Barrens and is underlain by the same Cohansy and Kirkwood groundwater aquifers. Its wetlands and forest habitat support a number of federal and state threatened and endangered species. The forest provides excellent nesting habitat for migratory songbirds. Because of its ecological significance, the New Jersey Conservation Foundation (NJCF), the NJ Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres Program, Natural Lands Trust (NLT) and other organizations have targeted the BHF for preservation and conservation.



Burden Hill Forest Parcels

Burden Hill Forest's resources are vulnerable to forest fragmentation, residential development, clear cutting and incompatible land uses

What Can I Do?

- * Protect the vegetative cover of the BHF
- * Implement ecologically sensitive farming practices
- * Implement conservation & management activities to protect surface & groundwater quality
- * Support development of land use planning tools to protect the BHF
- * Support land acquisition & preservation efforts by NJDEP & other non-profit organizations



Resources

American Littoral Society. 2007. Future of Burden Hill Forest at stake. (<http://www.littoralsociety.org/userfiles/doccenter/Burden%20Hill%20Forest.pdf>)

Heckscher, S. and et al. 2010. Plant Communities of the Burden Hill Forest, Salem County, NJ. *North-eastern Naturalist* 17(1):49-62

Honigfeld, H.B. 1997. Charting a Course for the Delaware Bay Watershed. New Jersey Conservation Foundation, Far Hills, NJ.

Hopewell Township. 2007. Conservation Element of the Hopewell Township Master Plan. Cumberland County, NJ. October 2007.

New Jersey Audubon Society. 2009. The Important Bird and Birding Areas (IBBA) Program. Cohansy River Corridor. Dec. 2009.

New Jersey Conservation Foundation. 2009. Project Areas: Burden Hill. (<http://www.njconservation.org>)

Reardon, C. 2008. Acting Locally. ANJEC Report 28(2):21-22. Mendham, NJ.

BHF Ecosystem Services

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| ◇ Groundwater recharge | ◇ Water filtration |
| ◇ Support for surrounding agriculture | ◇ Protection of vernal pool wetland areas |
| ◇ Habitat for threatened & endangered birds & plants | ◇ Recreation & aesthetics |
| ◇ Nesting habitat for migratory neo tropical songbirds | ◇ Preservation of open space |
| ◇ Resting & feeding grounds for migrating birds | ◇ Air filtration & quality control |
| | ◇ Carbon sequestration & climate control |

For more information regarding Hopewell Township's natural resources, please see the Environmental Resource Inventory on the Township website:
<http://www.hopewelltpw-nj.com/Environmental%20Commission.htm>